CHAPTER 16

# Evil in the Shadow: What Carl Jung Can Teach Us About Evil

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> You won't kill me out of some misplaced sense of self-righteousness. And I won't kill you because you're just too much fun. I think you and I are destined to do this forever. . . . You complete me.
>
> —The Joker to Batman (in *The Dark Knight*, 2008)

Most of us like to keep evil in the shadows. Either we completely deny the reality of evil, which is an increasingly popular postmodern phenomenon, or we try to keep it safely out of mind, detached from our everyday work, family, and recreation. If we do indulge thoughts about it, these are typically restricted to fantasies, fables, or stories, where we can personify evil in archetypal and unequivocal form. Batman has the Joker; Sherlock Holmes has Professor Moriarty; Cinderella has her stepmother; the Fellowship has Sauron. Even in these cases, however, evil is clearly demarcated and kept separate, not only from ourselves but also from what we perceive as good and wholesome. This retains our need for distance and detachment, lest we become infected or contaminated with evil if we come in too close contact with it. But it also means that we are surprised when it appears in the form of genocide, 9/11, high school killing sprees, or cruelty to animals, almost as if we had hoped that our denial of its existence, or our willingness to let it have the space of the shadows, would keep it tamed and at bay.

Evil is undoubtedly a complex phenomenon, and no one theory can accurately or completely capture its multifaceted nuances. However, an often overlooked, but key part of the problem may be that we are trying to keep evil removed from ourselves and in the shadows, rather than examining how

it already exists within us. In our conjecturing about evil, we may forget that this tendency to split off evil from ourselves and project it onto stories or other people is not just an externalization of the things that we consider evil but also an internal process, whereby we push into the recesses of our mind those things that are unacceptable. On their own, these repressed parts may not substantiate evil, but they can assume the life of a monster.

This is most accurately captured by the disparity between Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, who are one-in-the-same person. There is a sharp duality between Dr. Jekyll's kind, wise, and warm persona and the deformation, coldness, and absent conscientiousness of Mr. Hyde. In our most honest moments, we would all likely admit that we have a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Perhaps the problem is that we are not honest; we are duplicitous and disavow the presence of Mr. Hyde in our psyche. Perhaps the flaw in Dr. Jekyll was that he was unable to embrace a tension or find a synthesis between his opposites (Sanford, 1991). As this fable ultimately reveals, such a failure to integrate sows the seeds for evil.

In similar fashion, the goal of this chapter is to suggest that evil can emerge from the unconscious splitting off of unacceptable emotions, thoughts, and urges from the self, resulting in an incomplete tension between the good and bad within the self. Relying heavily on the theory, writings, and musings of C.G. Jung, we will attempt to show that evil and destructive tendencies can result when the shadow side is either ignored or when it is not integrated and balanced by the fullness of consciousness. To better understand this view, though, requires an exploration of Jung's ideas about the shadow, how it develops, and how it contributes to the emergence of evil. This will provide fertile ground for discussing how to use the process of integration to avoid perpetuating evil, as well as exploring the implications of this view for a personal responsibility for evil. With these goals in mind, let us go into the shadow.

## THE SHADOW

> Everyone carries a shadow, and the less it is embodied in the individual's conscious life, the blacker and denser it is. At all counts, it forms an unconscious snag, thwarting our most well-meant intentions.
>
> —C. G. Jung

The shadow side of human nature has assumed many names. The dark twin, the alter ego, and the dark side are all monikers that come to mind. But it was Carl Jung who probably most advanced and plumbed the concept of the shadow as it relates to the possibilities of human evil. According to Jung (1959/1971), the shadow is the psychic structure that contains all those emotions, experiences, motives, and shameful desires that we would rather

not admit, so we instead reject or banish. These are not things that are external to us and that we simply hope to avoid becoming, but rather elements and parts of who we actually are that we consider to be unacceptable and threatening. For some, the shadow may consist of lust, pride, or depression, whereas for others it might be rage, dependence, or vulnerability. This suggests that the content of the shadow may look different for each individual because we all differ in what we deem to be unacceptable. Some may see laziness as unacceptable, others may see sexuality that way, and still others may relegate kindness to the shadow.

In a sense, the shadow is the contrast to the persona, another psychic structure highlighted by Jung (1953/1971). The persona is the public mask we wear in order to function adequately in our relationships. It reflects the image and personality that we desperately try to convey to the external world, often as a way of eliciting social approval, acceptance, and love. In the least, it embodies our concerns about physical appearance, our attempts toward political correctness or the lack thereof, our level of congeniality to others, and our level of directness in relationships. Put simply, it is everything that we consider to be acceptable and important to demonstrate about ourselves to the public world. Because the persona and shadow are opposites, it is possible to loosely determine someone's shadow by imagining those features that are contrary to their social mask. For the person who tries to present as intelligent and culturally refined, there may be shadow elements of mundanity, naïveté, and earthiness. For the person who is overzealous in their attempt to appear gregarious and morally certain, their shadow may betray tendencies toward shyness and deep existential angst and doubt. Again, however, it is important to note that the shadow, namely those things that are unacceptable and threatening, looks different for each person. One person's shadow might be another's persona.

Perhaps this idea of the shadow can be better understood by exploring how it develops. The shadow arises through the process of splitting, which can also be understood as repression or disownership. In the development of each individual, there occurs a learning or internalization of the values of society and parents. There are behaviors, values, emotions, and thoughts that are considered ideal, for which individuals are praised and given approval. This can occur at any age, particularly when there is strong judgment or criticism of a certain personality trait by a culture, job, or respected person. However, it often first occurs in childhood, so kids learn a set of rules that earn acceptance or rejection. Freud (1933/1964) termed this the *ego-ideal*, an internal set of behaviors or values about how one should be. All those personality features that the ego-ideal deems acceptable remain on the conscious level and come to form the persona. In contrast, those emotions, impulses, and desires that do not match the ego-ideal are considered unacceptable and subsequently rejected. Anything that is too variant from this persona has to

be split off, such as fear, anger, grief, or other emotions because they represent threats to the ego-ideal and the persona. They are excluded from the psyche, from one's sense of self, and from one's dominant self-image. If, for example, you are raised with the ideal of being loving, morally upright, generous, and kind, then you would have to reject or hide anything antithetical to this ideal, like anger, selfishness, sexual fantasies, and the like (Miller, 1991). The shadow therefore contains everything that has been hidden for the sake of the ego-ideal (Whitmont, 1991).

As this suggests, once these rejected feelings, urges, and thoughts are split off or dissociated, they are cast, usually through the process of repression, into the unconscious, where they become the dark aspect of the personality, namely the shadow. They are dark, not because the elements are inherently sinister or evil, although they can easily include destructive and violent impulses, but rather because they are unconscious and out of awareness. They are kept distant from the light of consciousness, which renders them hidden, difficult to understand, dangerous, and disorderly. These qualities that are split off become a secondary personality, akin to a splinter personality, with its own contents, thoughts, ideas, images, and value judgments (Zweig & Abrams, 1991). The individual may consider the contents of this unconscious shadow to be "negative" parts of the personality, but it is more appropriate to conceptualize them as inferior rather than negative (Zweig & Abrams, 1991). They are inferior in the attention and status they are given because the ego-ideal has deemed them to be less important than the socially acceptable features of the persona. They are also inferior in their development and differentiation because they are given less space and mindfulness to differentiate. However, as we will later explain, this does not mean that the shadow has any less influence on behavior, emotion, or thought.

Robert Bly (1991) provides a useful analogy by likening shadow development to bag stuffing. Behind each of us, Bly states, is an invisible bag. The parts of us that parents, teachers, and society do not like get placed in the bag, perhaps as a way of survival or as a way of retaining others' love. Children are asked, "Can't you be still?" They are told, "Don't get angry." Girls are encouraged to make decisions based on fashion and collective ideas about beauty. Boys are reprimanded if they show too much artistic sensibility, or they are scolded for too much wildness. As a result, things like impatience, fury, and self-confidence are all placed in the bag, perhaps along with sexuality, untamedness, impulsivity, and freedom. Individual children are left with a highly restrictive set of personality traits and dispositions, and then spend a large portion of their youth searching for who they are and what separates them from all the others who look and act similar to them. It is often not until middle age that someone thinks to look in the bag, only to find that at least one half of their individuality and uniqueness has been placed there. It is also not uncommon for the elements of the bag to be hostile to the

person opening it. But, Bly cautions, even before this time, the elements in the bag assume their own personality and cannot be ignored. This shadow or splinter personality will emerge, and when it does, it can assume a dark and monstrous shape.

## THE EMERGENCE OF EVIL

> That boy may come back for his shadow.
>
> —Mrs. Darling (in Peter Pan)

Based on the foregoing discussion, it would be easy to prematurely conclude that the shadow is evil. However, the shadow is not absolute evil, nor the source of it. Quite the contrary, it has an incredible amount of energy and positive potential. It is the source of strong emotion, spontaneity, and creativity, and what one culture deems as shadow-worthy might be deemed by another as persona-worthy.

The potential for evil, rather, emerges from the lack of integration of the shadow. It is probably more precise to say that evil has a greater likelihood of emerging when someone fails to acknowledge, wrestle with, and own his/her shadow. This is because, in the absence of integration or a balancing of internal tension between opposites, the self becomes unipolar. The creation of the shadow is really the formation of a dualistic personality disguised in an attempt to appear unidimensional and consistent. Whenever shadow formation occurs, it is often conducted with a mind toward survival for oneself and one's family. Many individuals abandon parts of themselves for social approval, love, or pure physical or emotional existence, perhaps even for evolutionary purposes. However, this usually comes at the expense of realizing that they are most whole and authentic before the splitting, when they are forced to wrestle with, and hold in tension, their multiple dimensions and complexities. After the split, they become dualists in reality but unipolar in mind, overidentifying with those things that they perceive as good and relegating everything else to the only place they know where to put the bad, namely out of consciousness and in the shadows. This forms a breeding ground or Petri dish for evil.

Consider, for example, those occasions when someone tries to be perfect and completely consistent with their ego-ideal. Not only does this create an impossible standard of unipolarity that will invariably frustrate the individual, but also the individual loses an appreciation for the reality, and more importantly the power, of his or her own internal darkness. This might explain some of the evil acts of certain politicians or celebrities, who seem to dispassionately sanction or commit murder. Built up by the admiration of the populace, who largely do not want to hear about flaws, faults, and inconsistencies in their leaders, it makes sense that some of these individuals

overidentify with their persona. After several years of repetition and encoding of this pattern, they may come to see themselves as all good, only to later be surprised when some evil overcomes them or when others puncture their persona and accuse them of evil intention or actions. Because they have repressed the shadow, they live in a self-deception that leaves them susceptible to unconscious elements, such as vindictiveness, nepotism, and abusive power.

Even in less severe cases, our own hidden and forbidden impulses, emotions, and desires often emerge, usually in unconscious ways. We may hurt, violate, and disregard others because our shadow impulses and emotions seek expression and then erupt into consciousness. But because we are not already aware, accepting, and conscious of these elements, we unknowingly yield to their influence, sometimes with evil results.

In most cases, the abandoned parts of the self that form the shadow are not inherently evil, although the shadow of some individuals is clearly composed of evil. Destructiveness, deceit, and unchecked selfishness are among the shadow features of those in this category. The folktale of Bluebeard, who murdered spouses and kept their skeletons in the closet, or King Minos who built an elaborate labyrinth to hide the monstrous Minotaur, are examples of figures whose shadow contained the elements of evil. In these cases, denial or repression of the unacceptable parts of the self resulted in the denial or repression of one's own evil.

A similar phenomenon can occur when we are blinded to the reality of our own evil, such as our tendencies toward aggression and deceit. Like Bluebeard, our blindness to the skeletons in our closet renders us more likely to dispense misery and evil to others. Because there is a complete disconnect with the shadow, some individuals became so preoccupied with matching their ego-ideal or so enmeshed with their persona that they lose touch with their murderous and vengeful intentions. When these intentions and impulses are locked away, they build up a kind of rage or pressure that forcefully tries to break through their negation and denial, often in violent and surprising ways. The overworked employee who strives to present herself at work in a pleasant and acquiescing manner may fall prey to this when the anger in her shadow erupts in the abuse of her children. On a more collective scale, the Crusades during the Middle Ages, the Inquisition by the Catholic Church, and the attacks on the World Trade Center are all painful and humbling examples of evil emerging from the shadow. In these cases, individuals became so convinced of their own righteousness that they committed atrocities of evil. By keeping their evil in the shadows, they were completely victim to its unconscious working and its eventual expression. As Becker (1991) aptly states, the person who sees him or herself as innocent can create considerable harm without knowing it. Likewise, Peck (1991) claims that those who in their narcissism are blind to their shadow are most likely to inflict evil

and destruction upon others. It is hard not to wonder if these acts of personal and collective evil could have been avoided had the inflicting individuals been able to own their shadow, use it to balance their unidimensional focus on the ego-ideal, and been able to exercise power over their evil, simply because they were more mindful and aware of their darker capacities.

In the foregoing cases, the possibility for evil might make greater sense considering the clear elements of evil in the shadow. However, it may be more surprising to consider that the seeds of evil can just as easily be sown when someone's shadow does not display clear elements of evil. Put differently, if some individuals are susceptible to evil because they are trying to be overly pious and sanctimonious, others are likely to commit evil because they have discarded their own piety. In fact, those whose evil seems unquestionable, such as professional assassins, child molesters, and sadists, may be among those comprising this group. Unlike the majority of the population, this group does not have hate and violence in the shadow. They are quite comfortable expressing overt hate and deception, so they have a different psychic structure. Their values are reversed, with their shadow containing tenderness, compassion, and kindness. Those personality traits and emotions that are in the dark of their unconscious are positive feelings (Metzner, 1985). In a sense, their evil emerges from a similar denial or rejection of their shadow, but the contents of the shadow differ. Rather than failing to integrate and balance their hostility and destructiveness, they are unable to assimilate and bring into consciousness their conscientiousness and empathy. Yet their evil also emerges from not expressing the shadow side.

McCully's (1978) careful description of a familial murder may provide a helpful example of this. In gruesome fashion, the 18-year-old male who was involved had murdered his mother, tiny half-brother, and stepfather. Several explanations for these murders were raised, but key among these were an upbringing deprived of moral values and his grandmother's spoiling by sharing her considerable wealth with him. McCully argued that because this young man was granted every whim and imposed few boundaries, he was not able to integrate moral values or self-control. In Jungian terms, self-control and morality were in the boy's shadow, but his failure to integrate them into his psyche and his decision to instead project these values outward rendered him a vessel for evil.

This is also supported by the perpetrator's responses to Rorschach plates. McCully (1978) notes that not only did the young man report seeing several satanic-supernatural images in the cards, but also these were disturbingly given alongside images of flowers, trees, and other pleasant images. The young man offered these flowers and pleasant images with disdain and careful attention toward ensuring that the examiner knew these were representations of what the young man was not. These images, which would be comforting and relatable to most of us, were symbols of weakness and the

things he did not want to be, suggesting that his shadow was composed of a fear of being vulnerable and weak. His psychic battle, therefore, was between power and weakness, but rather than integrate the latter, he became fully immersed in power, relegating perceived weakness to the shadow. According to McCully, the young man felt compelled to murder his mother because she was a scapegoat who not only housed his projection of weakness but also was able to elicit his own vulnerability and weakness. To further fortify his position of power and completely banish the weakness and goodness in his shadow, he also brutally murdered her son and her husband. For this young man, relatedness and vulnerability came to symbolize weakness, but rather than risk tolerating their coexistence, he became his shadow, with evil results. In this case, evil involved a fatal capitulation from the loving parts of oneself (Ivey, 2005).

Therefore, whether the shadow is composed of overt elements of murder or elements of grace and gratitude, the problem is a loss of one's multidimensional nature in favor of a one-sided existence. Evil seems to emerge from an inability to accept the tension between opposites or an unwillingness to integrate and balance one's imperfection and complexity. It is easy to forget that the capacity for good and the capacity for hurt both coexist within the individual. Denial of either of these capacities can result in evil acts.

In most people, there is not a complete rejection of the shadow, as there was with McCully's case. This should not be taken to mean, though, that most people are incapable of evil. Even partial rejection of the shadow can result in evil. For example, someone may start a charity that provides food, clothing, and water to destitute countries, perhaps as a way to match their ego-ideal of selflessness and service to others, but unless they embrace their own selfishness, they may be shocked at how easy it is for them to embezzle contributions to the cause. Others who find themselves constantly lying in a way that endangers others are likely operating out of their own deceitfulness in an attempt to live up to some persona of integrity and honesty. In the same way, someone who participates in hate crimes may have been described as a paragon of kindness and thoughtfulness as a child, only to have repressed that part of themselves for the sake of survival as they matured in age. Each of these occasions of wrongdoing can be wrought in an imbalance between the persona and the shadow. If individuals are open to their shadow side or even accept the existence of their darkness, which again can be positive qualities, they may be able to catch themselves before committing these type of acts.

Put simply, the greatest protection against evil is honesty (Miller, 1991). By closing the distance with one's shadow, there is a simultaneous distancing from evil because it means dissolving a false persona and becoming aware of those tendencies, although previously unconscious, that facilitate evil. Refusing insight and acceptance of the entire self, including our glaring flaws and

complexities, seems to be what contributes most to our tendency to commit evil (Miller, 1991). By integrating and owning our own shadow, be it vulnerability, aggression, or selfishness, we can neutralize its destructive impact.

Does this mean that we should completely immerse ourselves in the shadow? Arguably, this line of thinking is equally faulty because it is again unipolar, leading to the abandonment of the important qualities of the persona and the ego-ideal. The problem for Dr. Jekyll, for example, was that once he decides to fully yield to his shadow Mr. Hyde, he becomes Mr. Hyde, including the acts of murder (Sanford, 1991). A similar process may explain some fascination with Satanism and the occult. Certain individuals, often young, are searching for connection with a destructive, violent, and psychopathic side that has been socially rejected. Because they are searching for ways to manage and integrate this wild, aggressive, and angry side, Satanism and gangs become highly appealing. Maybe cults, the KKK, and ideologies that encourage religious fanaticism have done a better job than the rest of society in providing a place for the shadow.

The problem is that individuals in these groups completely become the shadow and thereby commit the same error as those who try to completely clothe themselves in the persona, namely, losing the ability to hold opposites and emotional complexities in tension. Police officers and athletes, or perhaps the librarian who occasions a firing range, may represent better exemplars for integrating the hostile and aggressive tendencies of the shadow with the demands of the persona. As Jung (1991) says, "[W]e must not succumb to either of the opposites" (p. 171). It is rejection, splitting, and lack of integration that contribute to our likelihood to commit evil, so we are least likely to commit evil when we find tension between the opposites or tension between the multiple parts of ourselves.

## COLLECTIVE SHADOW

> Our capacity for evil hinges on our breaking through our pseudoinnocence. So long as we preserve our one-dimensional thinking, we can cover up our deeds by pleading innocent.
>
> —Rollo May

The discussion so far has focused on personal acts of evil, based on a failure to integrate or balance one's personal shadow. Societies, though, can also have a shadow. The shadow of Christian subculture often includes sexuality and spontaneity. Primitive cultures may place individuality or inventiveness in the shadow (Bly, 1991). Those in academia may relegate physicality and spirituality to the realm of the shadow. Some might argue that evil can even be seen in the collective pollution or poisoning of rivers and oceans. In each of these cases, societies and their members are living out communally

acceptable sides of life, but disowning socially unacceptable aspects. This results in the repression or placement of certain emotions and traits into the unconscious minds of a great number of people. What emerges from the lack of acceptance or awareness of this collective shadow is the possibility for an archetypal or collective form of evil. Racism, scapegoating, and religious wars are all examples of cultures or subcultures responding to their own socially acceptable emotions and trying to excise or tame their disowned tendencies.

In many cases, the collective shadow becomes personified in political leaders, such as Stalin, Hitler, or Hussein (Zweig & Abrams, 1991). These leaders receive the projections of the people and become representatives of the collective shadow and evil. Because the German people denied the existence of their societal shadow, they were unable to recognize its incarnation in Hitler (Metzner, 1985). Yet, as Metzner points out, for someone to be susceptible to being influenced by the collective shadow, there has to be some correspondence in his or her own psychic construction. Put simply, there must be something in our own shadow that makes us susceptible to the propaganda and psychopathic diatribe of these leaders. If more citizens in the German culture had been able to delve into their own unconscious and call attention to the ongoing genocide and Holocaust, exposing it to the world, it might have abated.

The activity of a collective shadow may account for the recent identification of an Axis of Evil. Whenever the term *evil* is used to describe another person or culture, it seems important to ask what type of projection is occurring. One way of managing the shadow and all the primitive, underdeveloped, and inferior parts of ourselves is to project it onto other people. This not only serves to keep us unconscious of our own darkness but also makes others bad, evil, dangerous, or whatever qualities comprise our own shadow. It turns first-person characteristics into third-person traits, so that "I am destructive" becomes "They are destructive." Similar to the young man's projections onto his mother in McCully's (1978) case study, other people embody the threatening aspects of ourselves and become scapegoats for evil (Griffin, 1986). This makes it easy for certain individuals and certain cultures to see evil all around, when it actually lies within.

This does not negate the existence of evil external to the self, but if we describe other societies, states, or countries as evil, it seems important to ask how this might also be a projection, allowing us to deny the same behavior and attitudes in ourselves. The shadow side for some Western societies might be greed, excess, aggressiveness, and righteousness. Of course, if other cultures denigrate Western societies for being capitalist, self-righteous, and war-mongerers, these cultures are also denying those same tendencies in themselves. They may also be projecting their shadow of violence and intolerance onto Western culture (Spiegelman, 2005).

Any time these collective projections occur is an example of black and white thinking, which reflects the absence of shadow integration and serves as a harbinger for evil. When we repress unacceptable emotions and ideas into our collective shadow, we come to see others as black or evil, which necessarily positions our culture as white or good. For this projection to happen, however, means that this same splitting is occurring internally, so that certain parts of ourselves are hailed as bad or inappropriate and other parts are hailed as good or acceptable, forgetting that perhaps we are neither one nor the other, but rather both. Similar to what happens when we fail to integrate our own personal shadow, societies must recognize the collective shadow for what it is and then learn how to deal with it, lest they become the tools of evil.

This process is often best expressed in the fables and stories of a given culture. The story of Luke Skywalker in the *Star Wars* saga embodies the journey from collective and personal splitting to personal wholeness. He starts his journey with an unfettered idealism that leads him to be immersed in the collective ideals of the Rebel Alliance against the evil of the Empire, which is perhaps best personified in the faceless, mechanical, and black figure of Darth Vader. Partway through Luke's training on the planet of Dagobah, however, he has to enter the cave of his own shadow and duel an apparition of Vader. After he strikes down this apparition, the face that hauntingly appears in the dark mask is his own. It is at this point that Luke recognizes his own darkness and capacity for evil, rather than keeping it safely projected onto a nameless entity and culture. In this moment of disillusionment, Luke becomes more mature and closer to wholeness. He is less likely to participate in collective evil because he can assume responsibility for his own shadow material. Along with Pogo in Walt Kelly's cartoon, he can say, "We have met the enemy, and he is us."

## HOW DO WE AVOID EVIL?

This thing of darkness I acknowledge mine.

—William Shakespeare

If we accept the idea that the capacity for evil is born in alienation and denial of key parts of ourselves, then one of the remedies for evil is the pursuit of a path toward psychic integration and wholeness. Those parts that have been dissociated and split off in the name of social acceptance or avoidance of discomfort need to be recovered and brought into the light of consciousness. This involves reconciling opposites, accepting our complexities and multidimensionality, and balancing internal tensions. This means that we have to go where we have concealed so we can convert "inner warfare to inner peace" (Metzner, 1985, p. 47).

The first stage in the process is likely one of mourning. Many individuals need to first mourn the betrayal of the self, the dissociation they had to make in order to find acceptance. Some form of mourning seems appropriate because facing one's shadow means becoming aware that we are not good enough for the ideal values that caused the splitting and the formation of the shadow (Griffin, 1986). This mourning is itself a form of acceptance of the loss of all the things that the self was not permitted to be. Sometimes this requires the exchange of a stance of violence and defensiveness for a posture of welcoming and grace. To fully mourn may mean opening to oneself, not viciously cutting oneself off (which is the weapon of the ego-ideal), but rather approaching one's shadow with respect.

At other times, this mourning may involve a wrestling match that demands courage and perseverance. This is aptly depicted in the biblical story of Jacob wrestling with the angel of God. Presaging Jesus's later temptation by the devil in the desert, one interpretation of this story is that it represents Jacob's struggle with his own shadow. Jacob refuses to let go of this entity, even when the entity requests it, and even after the entity permanently injures Jacob's hip socket, because Jacob knows he has to struggle in order to prevail. He responds that he will not let his adversary go until the latter blesses him. At that point, the entity responds, "What is your name?" revealing that the true contest is about identity. At this point, Jacob receives the blessing he has been longing for, namely, complete knowledge about who he is. Thereafter, he also walks with a limp, reflecting how a life with shadow integration is a life of imperfection and psychic woundedness. As this story shows, we do not have to befriend our shadow; in fact, we may have to sometimes engage in shadow boxing. This makes sense considering that it takes remarkable energy to face our envy of others, our discontent with our bodies, our hate toward others for not seeing us, or our fear of fulfilling our calling. Therefore, it is not necessary to befriend the shadow, but rather come to terms with it and accept the responsibility of struggling with it until it gives us our full identity and wholeness.

Once we have mourned or wrestled with our shadow, the path to integration demands a willingness to be in ongoing relationship with our shadow. This involves perpetual awareness and recognition of our shadow, a form of psychological unmasking that allows us to neutralize the power of our capacity for evil. This is often difficult because it is far easier to engage in repression and projection. It is much more difficult to live a full and conscious life. Even the thought of being in relationship with our disowned and unacceptable parts may seem unbearable. Imagine, for example, that you are asked to live in relationship with those whom you most strongly dislike. This is essentially what is necessary in order to diminish our capacity for evil because those we dislike house our shadow projections. This suggests that we have to expand our sense of self by suffering the conflict with our shadow (Ulanov

& Dueck, 2008). We have to remove our tendencies toward polarity and balance the conscious with the unconscious and the persona with the shadow. This is what Paul essentially accomplishes in the New Testament when he says in Romans 7:18–19, "For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing." Here, Paul humbly demonstrates a healthy recognition of the power of his shadow. In the same way, individuals need to recognize that it is just as easy to do evil as it is to do good. The tension of this awareness helps us realize that perfection, which is the aim of the persona and ego-ideal, is merely an illusion, whereas wholeness is the more realistic and healthy aspiration. It is when the conscious and unconscious are in responsible relationship that an individual is most protected from his or her own tendencies toward evil.

How is it that integrating, owning, and accepting the shadow protects us from our own evil? Part of the reason is because integrating the shadow makes us conscious of, and responsible for, who we are, how we feel, and how we act. Whitmont (1991) suggests that it is a replacement of repression with discipline. It does not help to convince ourselves that these shadow parts are not present. Rather, it is most helpful to recognize them and act responsibly regarding them. This does not necessarily mean acting out one's evil intentions because you can say yes to an uncomfortable feeling or impulse, but say no to its expression (Metzner, 1985). At other times, though, it may be appropriate to act according to the shadow impulses. What is most important is for an individual to not deny, defeat, or disavow his or her shadow, but instead to know one's shadow so it can be neutralized and controlled.

Without this awareness, individuals abdicate conscious ownership of their intentions. Becoming conscious of it means that they can choose between good and evil, rather than allowing the shadow to choose for them. Evil has a much larger entryway when we assume we are incapable of it because once we are aware of our shadow issues, they no longer have control of us. Once we have awareness and relationship with them, we have greater possibility for control over them. This may be what makes Alcoholics Anonymous so successful. In acknowledging their weakness and susceptibility to the power of alcohol, members paradoxically gain power and greater strength toward tolerating their conflicting desires for alcohol and healthy living. As this suggests, conquering devils and demons cannot be achieved by trying to destroy them, but rather by learning to acknowledge and assimilate what they symbolize into oneself (Diamond, 1991). This is the realm of responsibility for all aspects of our existence, but this responsibility cannot happen when certain parts of the self are disavowed.

This should not be taken to suggest that integration will lead to the defeat or elimination of the shadow. On the contrary, elimination of the shadow would lead to the elimination of the self and its creative energies. As

previously mentioned, the shadow is the key to our individuality and wholeness, including our inoculation against evil. This may explain why the dark, unacceptable sides of us can provide inestimable guidance whenever we are in a place of impasse or sterility. Any attempt to eliminate this shadow side only channels our attention and energy into building a wall of denial or trying to desperately live out a persona that is one-sided. A full and meaningful life emerges from accepting, rather than fighting and denying, who one is. As one Hindu tale puts it, "[T]he wise are attached to neither evil nor good. They are attached to nothing at all" (Zweig & Abrams, 1991).

Perhaps Schmookler's (1991) interpretation of Joseph Conrad's story "The Secret Sharer" illustrates this principle. In this parallel story to *Moby Dick*, a naked stranger climbs aboard a ship while the captain is on watch. This stranger, who is an officer from another ship, has murdered one of his men. The captain hides this stranger, at which point a sense of danger descends on the vessel, leading the captain to almost commit a crime parallel to that of his hidden stranger. However, when the captain finally recognizes his proclivities for murder, the tension dissipates and the shadow man leaves. In the same way, it is when we recognize our own shadow that we can finally dissolve our own tendencies toward evil. As Schmookler suggests, "[W]hen we gain the true strength to acknowledge our imperfect moral condition, we are no longer possessed by demons" (p. 189).

Among the things that interfere with this process of integration and its protection from evil are repression and denial. There is a reason why we place threatening elements of the psyche in the unconscious. We perceive and experience them as threatening and unacceptable, perhaps because of early messages from society, religion, or culture, but we are afraid that the awareness or unleashing of them will result in a loss of love, abandonment, or even death. This makes it incredibly difficult to overcome or unblock years of negation, and to allow oneself to express these impulses. It might even be argued that this blocking and negation is akin to the role of the devil. In Goethe's *Faust*, Mephistopheles is "the spirit who always says 'no,'" and in Christian theology, the devil is hailed as the "father of lies" or the sower of doubt. Thus, whenever we deny parts of ourselves, we may be playing the role of the devil (Metzner, 1985). Evil, therefore, is really a condition of alienation. The redemption from evil, be it personal or collective, comes from assimilating our shadow and raising it from unconsciousness so it can be integrated into the whole.

## LIMITATIONS

These ideas about evil are certainly not without their flaws. Among the possible critiques is that wholeness does not necessarily equate with morality. If the foregoing theory is correct, the tendency to commit evil is inversely related to one's ability to reconcile with one's shadow. However, there is no

explicit research or guarantee to suggest that integration with one's shadow will lead to less evil. McCully's (1978) case study provides some evidence for the emergence of evil following years of disownership of one's shadow, but this and similar case studies are only retrospective. Many other theories may also be able to explain the data after the evil has been committed.

Moreover, as Griffin (1986) aptly describes in surveying Jung's landscape, the emphasis of this theory is on the value of wholeness, not rightness. An appropriate confrontation with one's evil, or at least the potential for it, can allow for growth, but it does not necessarily eliminate or reduce evil. Simply achieving psychic harmony and balance may make one aware of tendencies toward evil, and the full knowledge of all of oneself forces the individual to be intentional and responsible for his or her actions, but there is nothing to suggest that fully seeing all of oneself precludes a decision to commit evil.

Granted, if someone is striving for maximal tension in the psyche, as Jung and this theory would encourage, much of an erring toward egregious forms of evil would be avoided (Hall & Raff, 2006). Murder, for example, seems like a strong imbalance and the dispelling of tension toward a polarity, so it would be inconsistent with the integration of the shadow. However, it could be just as easily argued that every decision will likely result in some imbalance for a period, albeit brief, until another decision can correct the imbalance. There is nothing to suggest that these momentary decisions, first toward the persona, then toward the shadow, then toward the persona, and so on, cannot be evil in their own way, even if tension is reestablished afterward. Perhaps Segal's (1985) observation that utility and truth are distinct is helpful here. Jung's ideas may have personal utility, but it does not mean they are truth.

An equally important limitation is that this theory about evil lacks an existential source of meaning or a rootedness in a system of morality. Somewhere in Jung's theories there may be an innate system of meaning, but there is no overt reason why it is important to achieve balance and avoid evil. It seems noble and admirable for someone to integrate their dissociated selves, but it may feel unsustainable without a system of meaning or purpose to drive it. Perhaps what is missing is a theology, because without it, the reason "why" is purely internal, without a sense of something larger (Griffin, 1986). This may be sufficient for some, whose internal values about wholeness and about holding tension with one's own antinomy provide enough weight to sustain a reason to integrate the shadow and avoid evil. For others, though, it may help to have an underlying meaning system or theology that gives purpose and reason for the avoidance of evil.

## CONCLUSION

These limitations notwithstanding, there may be some fresh implications that emerge from this idea that a greater capacity for evil emerges when the

shadow remains unintegrated. Among these is the possibility for a reconceptualization of our ideas about God and other divine entities. If perfection is really wholeness and an ideal tension between the totality of opposites, then it may be helpful to view God, Allah, and other supernatural figures with less unidimensionality. It may be more appropriate to conceive of them as the totality of all things, including light and dark. This is a key part of Jung's (1952/1971) argument in "Answer to Job," where he suggests that both good and bad coexist in the same godhead. He points out that God's antinomy is evident throughout the Old Testament. He promises to never break oaths, but later violates this promise because of jealousy, just as He demands loyalty and praise, but simultaneously delivers wrath and murder. God clearly has a full complement of inconsistent emotions and tendencies, such as rage, love, cruelty, and faithfulness. However, this idea about a God who is both creative and destructive, as well as good and bad, seems intolerable in many religions, at least monotheistic ones. By default, this intolerability or discomfort forces the creation of an all-loving God and an evil counterpart, such as Satan.

Perhaps this reflects humanity's need to project its collective shadow into a supernatural entity of evil. Or it may reflect a collective need to project all goodness into a God figure, which necessarily relegates all shadow elements to the unconscious, corporeal, and human realm. Regardless of the reason, this splitting off of the shadow from God risks making the image of God into a particular persona, perhaps depriving Him of the fullness of consciousness and awareness. It also deprives humanity of a more complete and honest image of wholeness, where the conscious and unconscious are held in healthy tension. A more accurate picture may be the God presented in Isaiah, where God is given responsibility for forming the light and the darkness, as well as making peace and creating evil.

Perhaps more to the point, if it is true that the threshold for evil is substantially lowered by a failure to integrate one's shadow, then evil becomes a deeply personal and individual issue. Much of our modern language about evil seems to betray one of two vantage points. For some, evil seems to be an outdated concept, as if it is some residue from Enlightenment thinking. When someone asks or comments on evil, those with this mind-set may sincerely ask, "Is that conversation still occurring?"

The other option seems to involve speaking about evil in more global, diffuse language, so that most everyone or everything that is hurtful, destructive, or unhelpful is described as "evil." In this case, which seems more prevalent in certain religious circles, *evil* seems to be used too loosely, resulting in a watered-down concept that has either little poignancy for everyday conversation or, conversely, a sharp edge used for judgment and exclusion.

Both of these vantage points, however, lose a critical perspective for understanding evil that the theory in this chapter attempts to recover. Both of these options keep evil external to the self. It is something "out there," rather

than something internal. Ethnic slaughter, child rape, terrorism, and sexual abuse are things committed by other people, but there is little appreciation for how close we may be to performing similar acts. If we accept the theory introduced in this chapter, namely the possibility that evil is proportional to one's wholeness and one's ability to sit in the tension with one's shadow, then there is a personal responsibility for evil. Because we can avoid individual acts of evil by owning our shadow, we are responsible for these individual acts of evil. However, we are also liable for collective evil because avoiding our abandoned and unacceptable impulses only colludes with the collective shadow, making us susceptible to unknowing participation in cultural or societal evil. Therefore, we can no longer simply claim ignorance, or try to withdraw from this responsibility, or project it onto others. Doing so only divides us further from ourselves and increases the power and possibility for the elements of the shadow to emerge in the form of evil. The best option seems to be to enter into the shadows, bring the dark elements into the light, and try to live in responsible consciousness of our own capacity for evil.

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